states. Although this seems to be a separate point to that of gold, many of the bad conditions for civilians came to those who had immigrated to Transvaal for work in the gold mines and were now being refused their rights. Here we can see how although gold specifically is not as important as the British lust for power in explaining the outbreak of the war, it is a seemingly insignificant factor that may have led to many more significant factors. Being a known literary writer it is likely that Shaw may have exaggerated the truth for dramatic effect however, as the book he writes for, Fabianism and the Empire, is a factual book, it would seem that what he says should be fairly based in fact and so counts as reliable. We must consider the idea that this idea may have been put forward by the government as a cover up for their real motive of wanting power and influence – as neither Lord Salisbury or Joseph Chamberlain mention this explanation it is likely that it is not as important as the primary explanation given above and so, although it boosts the significance of gold, it does not help it overtake Britain’s want for consolidation of power as a primary explanation for the outbreak of the Second Boer War.

Overall, while gold seems to be fairly irrelevant as an explanation for the outbreak of the Second Boer War, it must be taken into consideration that the discovery of gold in Transvaal was a factor that led to other significant explanations. As seen above, the discovery of gold led to migration to Transvaal for people wanting work and without this, the British wouldn’t have seen the terrible conditions and wanted to fight back for them. Similarly, although loosely linked, you could argue that the discovery of gold helped the Dutch to gain some momentum in the power they had in the Boer states and this is what may have triggered the British to desire to consolidate their own power and influence in South Africa before the Dutch beat them to it. Clearly, although the discovery of gold itself was not the primary explanation for war, it definitely contributed to what was the primary explanation for war – British need to consolidate their power and influence in South Africa.